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NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 151 *(continued)*

UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE ON OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.19)

Mrs. SELMANE (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: We listened carefully to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea. His presentation gives a picture of all the efforts already undertaken to prepare and develop the initiative with a view to the establishment of a "United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation".

At a time when our Organization is tackling the preparation of an agenda for development and working to make its fiftieth anniversary the target date for concluding a process of renewal and of adaptation to the new challenges facing mankind, this initiative is certainly timely and important.

The especially difficult economic situation of the developing countries, exacerbated by an unfavourable international environment, underscores the importance of the link between peace and development in today's world. The concept of development has itself become especially complex, and there is an ever-growing awareness of the need to integrate fully the elements of sustainability and human security; hence, the timeliness and the high stakes attached to the field of investigation proposed for the United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation. The Panel's independence and the competence of its members are such as to imbue its analyses and recommendations with the relevance, originality and boldness needed for it to have a salutary impact as we approach the fiftieth anniversary.

The Algerian delegation therefore wishes to reaffirm its support for this initiative, and it fully supports the draft resolution (A/48/L.19) that defines its objectives and modalities.

Mr. McKINNON (New Zealand): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Honourable John Kaputin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea, for his opening of the debate on this item and for his introduction of the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.19.

The United Nations Initiative on Opportunity and Participation was considered at the South Pacific Forum meeting in Nauru in August this year. The Heads of Government of Pacific States gave their support to the proposal at that meeting, and Forum members were encouraged to support it at this session of the General Assembly.

We believe that the further examination of this issue may help our understanding as we move to shape a new agenda for development in the 1990s.

Sustainable human development is now identified as the crucial target for our age. A key ingredient in that concept is the ability of people, as individuals or as groups, to participate fully and effectively in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. We

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now recognize that development which does not deal with this dimension is seriously flawed. For development to be equitable and sustainable it must reach out and encompass all of society, not just those individuals and groups who happen to be historically well positioned to benefit from development. The link between economic and social development and peace and stability is now well established.

The Government of Papua New Guinea and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea, the Honourable John Kaputin, are performing a very valuable service in bringing to our attention the fact that rapid economic growth can misfire if we do not provide opportunities for participation by and benefit to individuals throughout society. The draft resolution before us represents an endeavour to advance the process of identifying and remedying the barriers to opportunity and to participation that clearly do exist in many countries.

There is much fruitful work that can be drawn on by the panel proposed in the draft resolution. In particular, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has focused attention on this very issue in the 1993 *Human Development Report* and again last week in a very thought-provoking statement made by the new Administrator of UNDP, Gus Speth, to the Second Committee. We would encourage the panel to work closely with UNDP in the execution of its mandate, amongst the other avenues it will explore.

Given the potential range of issues relevant to opportunity and participation, my delegation believes it is important that the panel's work be carefully delimited and well focused. The panel will need to determine specific directions in which it wishes its work to proceed.

The theme of people's participation is receiving attention in a number of United Nations forums, for example in the elaboration of an agenda for development, which will complement the "Agenda for Peace", and also in preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development. The initiative of examination, by the panel, of the issues of opportunity and participation is therefore timely across a broad spectrum of United Nations activities. The panel's reports to the General Assembly should provide a valuable input to these broader discussions under way in the United Nations.

I think we all agree that impulses for participation should be better understood and nurtured. We therefore look to the proposed panel to advance this process.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating the Government of Papua New Guinea for the proposal on the United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation and warmly welcomes the stimulating statement with which the Honourable John Kaputin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea, opened the debate on this initiative.

As prerequisites for human development, opportunity and participation are so self-evident that we tend to take them for granted. In any social system people have to pursue their aspirations for development, and opportunity and participation are necessary for their advancement. Necessary as it is for human development, the spirit of initiative and enterprise is inadequate if unaccompanied by opportunity and participation. My delegation believes that this has been the experience of many countries, particularly developing countries, in the last several years. An important objective of the reforms undertaken by many countries around the world, especially developing countries, has been to provide opportunity and participation for their citizens.

In the case of my own country, Tanzania, we learned very early on that while nothing can replace one's own efforts for economic and social advancement, supportive intervention from the outside has a critical role to play in the process of development. That role essentially involves making available to citizens the opportunity to develop themselves and to participate in making the decisions that affect their lives.

Each of our countries has had its own experience. The Papua New Guinea initiative provides us with a very welcome opportunity to share these experiences and to reach a common understanding on ways and means of enlarging the opportunity and participation of our citizens in their own advancement and in that of their countries.

Since the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, when the idea was first presented, we have had a number of opportunities to discuss the proposal and to assess its contribution to the evident and urgent need to increase the opportunity and participation, not only of citizens in the local economy as stated earlier, but also of developing countries in the global economy. At both the national and the international level, opportunity and participation are required for development. Unfortunately, at the international level the concept of opportunity and participation has not been fully accepted. That is why the call for an agenda for development is very timely. As we await the Secretary-General's report on this subject, the proposal by the Government of Papua New Guinea gives

us a welcome opportunity to initiate a discussion which can only enrich the debate on this important item.

The fact that reform efforts in the developing countries to foster growth and development continue to be frustrated by the persistent inequalities in international economic relations constitutes a serious obstacle to the establishment of global partnership and to the realities of interdependence in the world today. The proposal on opportunity and participation is both timely and urgent, as it allows us to examine past failures in our attempts to build a just and equitable international system and to chart new and innovative strategies for sustainable development. We have attended several international conferences focused on different aspects and dimensions of human cooperation and development in an attempt to seek solutions to growing inequalities in the global economy.

The proposal by Papua New Guinea rightly points out that even after several decades of United Nations resolutions, expert studies, special international conferences, including the North-South dialogue and plans of action, many developing countries are experiencing static or declining rates of economic growth, while many of the most serious and widespread difficulties experienced in securing opportunities for economic participation by individuals, groups and firms in developing countries remain largely unaddressed.

The United Nations International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade lists six goals for the achievement of its aims:

> "(a) A surge in the pace of economic growth in the developing countries;
>
> (b) A development process that is responsive to social needs, seeks a significant reduction in extreme poverty, promotes the development and utilization of human resources and skills and is environmentally sound and sustainable;
>
> (c) An improvement of the international systems of money, finance and trade so as to support the development process;
>
> (d) A setting of strength and stability in the world economy and sound macro-economic management, nationally and internationally;
>
> (e) A decisive strengthening of international development cooperation;
>
> (f) A special effort to deal with the problems of the least developed countries, the weakest among the developing countries." *(resolution 45/199, annex, chap. II, para. 14)*

The reality is that the international community is nowhere near realizing the above goals, as the circle of prosperity has not widened to include the majority of the developing countries that are not so fortunate as to receive favoured access to finance, markets and technology. In the Uruguay Round, the priorities and interests of developing countries have figured marginally even in areas such as markets for agricultural commodities, which constitute the mainstay of their economies. Commodity markets have continued to be depressed, and to be destabilized by changing demand and supply conditions. Prices of commodities have declined further, in some cases even in nominal terms. There is a danger that the establishment of regional trade blocs may exclude many developing countries from preferential access to the markets of the developed countries.

The least developed countries are almost exclusively dependent on official development assistance (ODA) for their external financing and, because of their limited access to international financing markets and foreign direct investment, they have been unable to benefit from an increased flow of external resources to developing countries that has taken place in the past few years.

With the dramatic and profound changes that have taken place in the world political and economic scene, the United Nations has an unprecedented opportunity to play its Charter role in the vital area of economic and social development through important international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development and the International Conference on Population and Development, to mention but a few. The preparatory process for these conferences has already identified the problems encountered in contemporary international economic relations and in development, and this should facilitate the search for their solutions.

The proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation will serve as a useful link for various resolutions adopted by the United Nations and especially by United Nations organized international conferences in seeking a methodology through which those goals and objectives may be realized. The Human Development Report for 1993 states:

> "People everywhere are certainly demanding much greater access to political, economic and social opportunities. They might not expect 'full participation' - but they do want a steady advancement towards it. Participation is, after all, a process, not an event ... it helps maximize the use of human capabilities and is thus a means of increasing levels of social and economic development." *(pp. 21 and 22)*

The same can be said about nations. Opportunity and participation will certainly bring about effective partnership and equitable coöperation in the sphere of international economic relations. Effective economic integration of developing countries in the world economy could be a major stimulus to global economic activities, provided it remains open and outward-looking and does not result in additional external barriers.

My delegation fully supports draft resolution A/48/L.19, which was introduced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea. It seeks the appointment of a United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation composed of a small number of distinguished experts and eminent persons, broadly representative of the international community, in order to prepare a comprehensive report to be considered during the General Assembly's fiftieth session.

I am also pleased to announce my delegation's sponsorship of the draft resolution, and I share the hope of many previous speakers that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. LAING (Belize): It may well be the case that undemocratic and illiberal regimes are becoming an increasingly rare species. As we approach the end of the millennium, some think that this trend can be seen everywhere. While we have not witnessed the wholesale emergence of stable liberal democracies, liberal democracy has become the universal political and economic aspiration, spanning different regions and cultures around the globe.

Liberal principles such as individual freedom, popular sovereignty, free markets and free trade have become the new watchwords and the means through which underdevelopment can allegedly be definitively conquered. The prescription to solve our social, political and economic problems has now become that we in the developing world must replace traditional forms of social organization with economically rational ones based on function and efficiency; we must open our markets to international trade and we must tighten our belts, both metaphorically and in reality. Structural adjustment, too, is the popular euphemism.

Over the past two decades many in the developing world have dutifully followed the regimen that has been laid out for us. All of us have embarked on a process of reforms and the creation of structures wherein we must take the same prescribed medicine for the ills that plague us - and, indeed, several of us who have swallowed the pill have experienced reasonably high levels of material prosperity and long periods of stability and positive economic growth.

However, that is only part of the picture. In many countries there have been no improvements. In fact, the socio-political and economic situation has deteriorated to the point where it threatens international stability. Problems abound in many of the countries that have accepted the prescription and swallowed the medicine. Indeed, it would be accurate to say that the social, political and economic gap between the developed and the developing worlds has widened, even as we in the developing world attempt to adopt the measures that are indispensable are told that we must wait for growth and development to take off.

Why is this so? We believe that part of the truth lies in the fact that over the past quarter of a century we have been experiencing top-down development. Solutions have been mandated from the top - and when we say "the top", we mean the international economic and financial institutions, development-oriented multilateral institutions and, indeed, those of us in leadership positions in our Governments. We have told our people that they must follow the uniform prescription to overcome the myriad problems.

We have made a fundamental mistake throughout this entire process. We have not always related the institutions, structures and remedies to the genuine needs of our people. And we have failed to give the people an adequate role in articulating and guiding their own political, economic and social destinies. We have compounded the problem by forgetting a basic truism, namely, that the primary purpose of development is to enlarge people's opportunities and choices.

We agree with the *Human Development Report 1993* that:

> "People today have an urge - an impatient urge - to participate in the events that shape their lives. And that impatience brings many dangers and opportunities. It can dissolve into anarchy, ethnic violence or social disintegration. But if properly nurtured in a responsive national and global framework, it can also become a source of tremendous vitality and innovation for the creation of new and

more just societies." *(UNDP Human Development Report 1993, p. 1)*

We see the Papua New Guinea initiative on opportunity and participation in this light. It provides an opportunity to begin the dialogue on the means and mechanisms through which we can involve our peoples in the process of development and further ensure that we create opportunities that will enable them and us to meet their genuine needs. After all, a primary purpose of development is to create and enlarge social, economic, developmental and political opportunities.

Let us, therefore, go beyond the formal symbolism of talking about grass roots. The people must fully and truly participate in the widest possible horizontal range - that is to say, villagers, trade unions, the aged, youth, native peoples and others usually overlooked in the top-down, verticalized process. In this light, this proposal is very timely. It is also opportune, because we are about to embark on a new dialogue about the issues of development with the presentation of the Secretary-General's agenda for development. We are therefore happy to act as a sponsor of the draft resolution embodying this worthy initiative.

If all that this initiative accomplishes is that the agenda for development and the Assembly fully accept and articulate the critical importance of popular participation, it will go down in history as a signal accomplishment.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): Odd as it might seem, this is the first occasion on which our delegation has come to the podium to speak during the current session of the General Assembly. Thus, it gives us great pleasure to join in the congratulatory remarks previously addressed to you, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

Quite aside from our long and deep personal friendship, and that of our respective countries and delegations, you are well known for your professionalism, your diplomatic skills and your integrity. These are not easy qualities to come by. You, therefore, are one of the most highly respected of all of our colleagues in this House. The manner in which you have led our deliberations thus far has certainly justified our great faith in you.

We also take pleasure in thanking your predecessor and commending his efforts during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We also join in the congratulations extended to the new States that have recently joined the United Nations, bringing us yet one step closer to our long-cherished goal of universality in the membership of the world body.

Vanuatu is a sponsor of draft resolution A/48/L.19 on the United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation. As such, we associate ourselves with the statement made two days ago by the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea in introducing that draft resolution. There is no doubt that the active involvement and full participation of everyone in a given society - men and women, young and old, the economically advantaged and the disadvantaged, the physically firm and the infirm - are essential elements in the process of economic and social development. Doors of opportunity that remain permanently closed to any segment of a society tend to diminish the ability of that society to realize its full potential. Similarly, on a global scale doors of opportunity that remain permanently closed seriously diminish the ability of mankind to realize its full potential.

The process that led the world to Rio de Janeiro last year for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development taught us the value of a global partnership. However, for that lesson to have a lasting and meaningful impact the partnership will have to be further nurtured, strengthened and institutionalized at its very roots. All segments of society, beginning with the smallest, most distant and most diverse communities, have their own unique contributions to make. Those contributions should all be encouraged and valued for their unique worth.

That is one important aspect of the proposal on opportunity and participation. There is another, which we think should also be borne in mind.

As electoral democracy spreads throughout the world - to big nations and small, in every corner of the globe, and to every village, hamlet and outer island - few ideas could more appropriate or more timely than opportunity and participation. For, as electoral democracy spreads throughout the world, new questions are being raised in both the new democracies and the older democracies - questions about economic justice and what the future holds in store for those who have never had much margin for economic error. Fears are being articulated about social equality, and new concerns are being expressed about the future of international or multilateral democracy.

Every day, those who live and labour in developing countries - particularly the smallest, the poorest and the most ecologically fragile - find themselves facing less and less certain futures. Every day, the representatives of the people of such countries find themselves having to defend the right of those people to be heard, in all forums, on all issues, and having to defend, in international forums, the very democratic principles and practices that most people recognize as being essential in their own countries.

We cannot help asking: is it not a cruel hoax to tell our people that they can have a voice in choosing a Government and Government representatives but then to construct elaborate processes that have the effect of denying those Governments and those Government representatives the opportunity to have an effect on the decision-making process? Is it not reasonable to expect the normal fundamental rules of participation in the democratic processes within countries to be looked upon favourably with respect to participation in the decision-making processes in international forums?

Many ideas are brought to mind by the initiative of the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea. Like other delegations, we have limited ourselves to commenting on a minimum of those ideas. We view this proposal as another important step in the global enfranchisement of those who are not yet enfranchised to the fullest extent possible. The ideas that may be generated by this proposal, with their potential impact on peoples, communities and nations, are its most appealing aspect.

Like other sponsors of the draft resolution, we continue to be open-minded and receptive to the ideas of others. Therefore, consultations with a number of interested delegations have continued, and some very positive suggestions have been made and will be reflected in a revised text. It is to be hoped that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus and that all of us will have an opportunity to participate in further refinement and development of this very timely and well-intentioned idea.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform delegations that, in order to give the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee an opportunity to review the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/48/L.19, action on it is postponed to a date to be announced.

AGENDA ITEM 40

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT:

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/586)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.21)

The PRESIDENT: I call on Mr. Mario Carias Zapata, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.21.

Mr. CARIAS ZAPATA (Honduras) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I wish, on behalf of the countries of the Central American isthmus, to say again how pleased we are that you, Sir, are presiding at this General Assembly session, in which each of us has promised you support and cooperation as you discharge your delicate tasks.

At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly praised the Central American effort to achieve peace through implementation of the "Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America" and of the agreements, adopted at summit meetings, that reaffirm the decision of the Central American Presidents to declare Central America a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

Today, Central America is at one of the most important stages in its recent history - that of the consolidation of democracy. Evidence of this is the conclusion of the international Treaty known as the Tegucigalpa Protocol of 13 December 1991, which created the Central American Integration System (SICA). That Protocol reflects the political and legal regeneration of the region as a cohesive exercise in integrated development to be undertaken through machinery of regional coordination - machinery that has been functioning since 1 February this year - with a view to reinvigorating economic, social, cultural and political programmes, as well as programmes concerning the Central American environment.

We therefore agree with the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General, who, since 1992, has been striving to bring about coordination within the United Nations and who, in his most recent memorandum, talks of the need for an integrated approach to development, based on the indivisible elements of peace, democracy and development programmes.

Furthermore, we believe that the establishment of democratic regimes in our countries does not by itself guarantee solution of the major social, political and economic problems that we, as countries and as a region, confront. Democracy in Central America requires understanding and sustained support from the international community.

The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly, says:

> "Social disparities remain a source of tensions. With regard to health care, housing, education and employment, the region's indicators continue to be a cause for concern. Across the region, extreme poverty has been on the increase in recent years. In addition,

new challenges have emerged, such as drug trafficking and environmental degradation." *(A/48/586, para. 7)*

To trace and undertake a new course of development in peace and democracy, our countries require, as a minimum, a framework of stability that is in accordance with the special features of each country. The common denominator is the achievement of national consensus in respect of peace and development. That is how the socio-economic problems will be solved and the sustained human development necessary to ensuring that resources reach the most needy sectors of the population will be made possible.

The Central American Governments, aware of their historic responsibility to ensure that their peoples may enjoy peace, security, justice and social development, have consistently striven, in all areas and at all levels, to achieve the goals that were set in 1987. That is why in this forum, we speak with a single voice, in a spirit of unity, and with a single hope - that better standards of living may be provided for our peoples.

The Central American Presidents met 14 times and signed agreements of the greatest importance for Central America. During those meetings they called for the support and assistance of the international community. Its response was not long in coming: the participation of the United Nations in the peace processes in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and now in Guatemala, and its participation in programmes of cooperation such as the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America (PEC), has mobilized important resources for the region as part of emergency programmes, and immediate-action and social-and-economic recovery programmes.

The Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees developed through the United Nations Development Programme has made an innovative contribution in Central America by establishing procedures which have mobilized various social sectors in the region to work together to find solutions to common problems.

Nevertheless, regardless of the efforts undertaken and the resources invested in Central America, there remain serious political, economic and social problems which could nullify the gains made to date. In the present debate in the Assembly, and throughout the general debate, representatives of our countries at the very highest level have expressed concern on the subject - and, because of its importance, I consider it appropriate to remind members of this.

Thus, the President of El Salvador, Mr. Alfredo Cristiani Burkard, stated:

"The rhythm of transformation occurs in a way that cannot be resisted. We see this in the changing international, political and economic relations of our time. An almost spontaneous restructuring has followed the removal of so many straitjackets. And this restructuring has brought to light what has always been most important: the real problems. As the East-West conflict has disappeared, almost no one speaks about the North-South conflict or alternative alignments, but the serious problems of inequality, critical poverty and dependence have not been resolved. They are still with us. And they are a challenge for this new order which we are trying to create on a more rational and reasonable foundation." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, p. 3)*

Minister Bernd H. Niehaus Quesada of Costa Rica reminded us:

"Those who were interested in a Central America full of bloodshed and trenches do not want to deal with a Central America of the poor, the Central America that calls for cooperation for development, for understanding of its human and economic tragedies." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 23rd meeting, p. 9)*

I should also like to remind members of the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua to promote economic recovery within the framework of and adjustment process that includes economic growth and development - a process that has been hampered by the violence that was a product of war, by the needs of thousands of displaced persons, refugees and unemployed who must be integrated into the country's economic activities and by the effects of natural disasters. The Government of Nicaragua has also made important progress in bringing about broad social consensus through national dialogue, the adoption of measures that will lay the bases for reconstruction, and economic and social development.

In fact the case of Nicaragua is special. It has had to go through a threefold transition. It is overcoming the aftermath of war; it is building democracy; and it is restoring dynamism and strength to the economy in a society that is still polarized. That makes it necessary to give Nicaragua special treatment which will allow for flexibility in the application of structural-adjustment measures, so that, without losing its sense of direction, it can obtain loans and investments - on preferential terms -

designed to provide incentives to social investment and local production, and enable it to adapt to the pace of fiscal adjustment, the reduction of import customs duties and the freeing up of the financial system.

As part of these efforts, the Central American Presidents met in Guatemala City from 27 to 29 October last in their fourteenth summit. Their political Declaration contained this statement:

> "The democracy we have been building with such great hope is beginning to reap the fruits of a peaceful Central America - a Central America invigorated by a new integrationist vision capable of changing the course of history."

The Presidents also declared:

> "... we have launched a bold and innovative integration process that has given us regional institutions and forums that include presidential summits, the Central American Parliament and the Central American Court of Justice, all of which are expressions of the legal and political framework established by the Tegucigalpa Protocol."

In the operative part of the Declaration the Presidents decided that they

> "... will promote the establishment of a Central American social investment fund under the auspices of the Central American Integration Bank to fight poverty, to promote social works, and to improve the people's standard of living by financing social development programmes."

They also called on the international community to support this initiative at the international conference for peace and development in Central America which they hope to convene in 1994.

The Presidents stated:

> "Central America offers all the necessary conditions for the independent implementation of a peace plan and an agenda for development. Our efforts, together with specific expressions of international solidarity, will allow us to make our region a model for resolving conflicts, consolidating peace, and enhancing democracy through comprehensive development."

Following these guidelines laid down at the Summit, yesterday the Central American countries, at the invitation of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), attended a technical international meeting with the community of donor countries, specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and other regional organizations, with a view to relaunching and revitalizing programmes and reviewing what has been achieved so far, and seeking new initiatives in multilateral cooperation for the region.

Central America, like other regions, has to face and overcome serious difficulties that are curbing its development. We are therefore striving to achieve diversification of our production structures, in the quest for new markets for our products and in order to attract the necessary foreign-investment flows. As Mr. Arosemena, on behalf of the late Mr. Julio E. Linares, the Foreign Minister of Panama, reminded us in the Assembly:

> "The Central American countries are striving to build a peaceful, free, democratic and developing region. For that reason, the efforts to bolster peace that have been initiated require actions capable of solving our economic, social cultural and humanitarian problems in order to strengthen our peoples' faith in democracy." *(Official records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting, p. 6)*

Our region wishes to record its gratitude for the results of the political dialogue and economic cooperation between the European Union and its member States, the States of Central America and Panama, and the Group of cooperating countries - Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela - and also for the initiative of the industrialized countries which, with us, make up the forum known as the Partnership for Democracy and Development in Central America.

We are also aware that the operations of the United Nations that have been undertaken in the area, such as the PEC and the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) have yielded many results. But CIREFCA still has to conclude its operational cycle in May 1994, and PEC may meet difficulties in obtaining financial resources to complete its programmes, which will give it new prospects and more time for international cooperation for Central America.

That is why, with a view to making a substantial contribution to the process of transforming our region, Central America is submitting for the General Assembly's consideration draft resolution A/48/L.21, which I have the honour of introducing and in which we set forth new concepts for this recovery and call for support for national and regional actions that have been taken. We wish to consolidate the principal achievements in the quest for

peace, national reconciliation and economic reconstruction and to take up the challenges and problems to be solved with the support of the international community, which has an irreplaceable role to play in Central America. We hope that the Assembly will adopt this draft resolution without a vote.

In conclusion, I should like once again to thank the Secretary-General for his work and the report which he has presented to us on the situation in Central America and which is contained in document A/48/586. We are particularly grateful to those who made it possible for the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America to be a substantial contribution by our Organization and the international community to Central America.

Much remains to be done, but we have faith and confidence that our efforts and those of the international community will enable us to work together for a better future for the peoples of Central America.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union in this debate on the situation in Central America, which has begun with the introduction of a draft resolution of which we have become aware only today. In the circumstances, the European Union wishes to make it clear that its statement in the debate will in no way prejudge its position on the draft resolution.

Since the San José Declaration in 1984, the peace processes in Central America have enjoyed substantial support from the European Union. For some years now, they have also been closely followed by the General Assembly.

The overall situation in Central America has improved since the 1980s in terms of democratization, the consolidation of peace, and regional stability and integration. Nevertheless, the Esquipulas Agreements have been implemented in different ways in different countries. Implementation has given rise to tempered optimism or to hope in certain cases; but other situations, where national reconciliation and the consolidation of peace are still out of reach, remain a matter of concern.

Far from discouraging us, the remaining difficulties must strengthen the common determination of the peoples and Governments of the region and of the international community to persist in their efforts. I should like to pay a tribute to the Governments and political leaders of Central American countries that have exhibited the vision that is indispensable if their peoples are to move forward on the path of peace, development and democracy.

Although still fragile, the decisive progress in the Salvadorian peace process is one of the remarkable achievements in which our Organization can take pride. I should like to congratulate the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and its personnel on the positive results they have achieved so far in the restoration of peace in El Salvador.

The European Union is determined to continue to play its full role both within the framework of the political dialogue with the Central American countries and in terms of cooperation. We must nevertheless recall that the solution to remaining conflicts must come from the Central Americans themselves.

Armed conflict in El Salvador is now a thing of the past. We must welcome this success for peace, which we owe to the realism displayed by both parties and to the efforts of the international community and, in particular, the United Nations. The European Union has lent its unswerving support to the implementation of the Peace Accords and continues to stress respect for all their parts. We welcome the measures taken by the Government to implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission on the Purification of the Armed Forces, to reduce the size of the army, and to demobilize the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and transform it into a political party.

Despite such undeniable progress, recent developments in El Salvador have aroused concern. As the beginning of the electoral campaign approaches, the intensification of political violence, noted in the latest report of the Human Rights Division of ONUSAL, and the resurgence of illegal armed groups, noted in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth, remind us of the continued fragility of the process for the peaceful settlement of the Salvadorian crisis. On 28 October, the European Union expressed its concern at the resurgence of political violence and asked President Cristiani to see to it that those responsible for violence are caught and brought to trial.

Recently, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of making up for the delay that has occurred in the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth. He also stressed the need to respect the Peace Accords. In order to break the vicious circle of violence, he called for the rapid establishment of the machinery for investigating illegal armed groups, and the establishment of the national Civil Police and the land-transfer programme. In his statement of 5 November, the President of the Security Council supported the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The European Union attaches particular importance to the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth. The European Union, which has contributed through substantial action to the reinsertion of former combatants into the agricultural sphere, also wishes to see the problems related to land distribution solved. Similarly, the new national Civil Police must receive the necessary resources to perform its task efficiently. The European Union is now studying the matter of what resources it can use to help the new Civil Police Academy.

Serious efforts are still required before the human rights situation will be satisfactory. In particular, an end should be put to ordinary violence that may conceal political motives.

Finally, all progress achieved must be confirmed by a properly conducted electoral process. The elections next March will be a decisive test of the peace process. The impartiality of the bodies responsible for the proper conduct of the elections, broad participation in the elections, and the peaceful acceptance of the voters' choice will be the criteria for success. Following up the efforts it has already made in regard to the preparations for the electoral process, the European Union is now actively considering an assistance project aimed at contributing to the training of the personnel responsible for the proper conduct of the elections. ONUSAL, whose mandate has been expanded to include observation of the elections, will make a valuable contribution to the electoral process.

Having condemned the suspension of constitutional order in Guatemala, the European Union welcomed its peaceful restoration and expressed its support for President de León Carpio.

We earnestly hope that the President of Guatemala will succeed in consolidating democratic institutions and the dominance of civilian authority. We note his proposal to promote national dialogue and solve the most severe social problems, but we are concerned that the proposal does not yet enjoy the support of all segments of society and we call on all parties concerned to show flexibility by permitting the broadest possible participation in the political and social process. We hope too that resumed peace negotiations will rapidly end this, the oldest, armed conflict in Central America, and will bring about profound political and social reforms.

We welcome the fact that both the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) have requested the Secretary-General's help in facilitating the resumption of dialogue. In that connection, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote that dialogue. The European Union reiterates the great importance it attaches to significant improvement in the human rights situation and, in particular, in efforts to punish the guilty.

The European Union is pleased that Guatemala has affirmed its recognition of Belize, and hopes that those two countries will continue to improve their relations and settle their territorial dispute once and for all.

Turning to Nicaragua, the European Union notes with concern the deterioration of the situation in that country. Despite the amnesty declared by the Government, the situation of demobilized personnel has not led to true peace.

We reiterate our firm support for President Chamorro's efforts to promote dialogue and national reconciliation and to assure civilian control over the army. We call on all political forces to respect their commitment not to turn to political violence, to overcome their differences and to make the necessary effort to implement a plan for national reconciliation placing the higher interests of the country above political antagonisms. The support the European Union has given for many years to the Central American peace process and the significant assistance it provides to Nicaragua in that framework entitle the Union to issue this appeal - by which it intends no interference - to the political groupings in Nicaragua. While the international community is continuing its efforts to contribute to the process of national reconciliation, the primary responsibility for this still belongs to the Nicaraguans.

We hope the mediation efforts of the Central American Presidents and the Organization of American States (OAS) will make it possible very shortly to achieve a true national agreement.

Another priority concern of the European Union with respect to Central America is human rights. There can be no lasting economic development or political stability without human rights guarantees.

The efforts of the European Union in this sphere are also reflected in its support for many practical projects relating to democratization and human rights. We share the gratification of our Central American partners at the fact that the multi-year programme for the promotion of human rights, solemnly launched at the Lisbon conference in February 1992 by the European Union and the countries of Central America, has come up to speed. That programme joins many other endeavours in support of democratization, electoral processes in particular.

The European Union has continued its efforts for the reintegration of refugees and displaced or demobilized persons, particularly with respect to El Salvador and Nicaragua, and for the return of Guatemalan refugees.

To support the fight of these countries against drug trafficking, the European Union has provided Central American countries with trading facilities in the European market.

The European Union reaffirms its determination to cooperate with the Central American countries in their efforts to protect the environment and restore ecological balance.

The European Union also welcomes the resumption of the integration process, marked by the implementation of the Central American Integration System and the establishment of the Central American parliament, which it supports.

We have noted with interest initiatives such as the Caracas Commitment and the Caracas Statement issued by the Central American countries and the Group of Three to promote cooperation and trade.

The implementation of the San Salvador Agreement between the European Union and Central America, signed at the ninth San José ministerial meeting, held in El Salvador in February 1993, marks a new stage in relations between the two regions and opens the way for continued and intensified Community cooperation. I would recall that the European Union is the largest provider of assistance to the region.

Next year we mark the tenth anniversary of our dialogue with Central America, a dialogue through which we have striven to support the peace processes, both politically and in terms of cooperation. The progress is encouraging, but firm support from us and from the international community at large remains indispensable. The European Union vigorously reaffirms its commitment to promote peace, democracy and development in Central America.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): The Central American peace process has made remarkable progress in the past six years, since the Esquipulas Agreements were concluded. The peoples of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua have demonstrated an unshakeable determination to overcome decades of violence, repression and deprivation. Their progress towards reconciliation and reconstruction, bolstered by the initiatives of like-minded countries, has demonstrated that peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts may be effectively combined. Indeed, I believe the experience in Central America can serve as a model for similar endeavours in other regions.

Decades of conflict and mistrust cannot be forgotten overnight, and numerous obstacles remain on the path to lasting peace. Japan has various concerns about the situation in the region, and I would like to touch on them very briefly.

First, in El Salvador, the signing of the Chapultepec Agreement by the Government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in January of last year formally ended the armed conflict and marked a turning-point for both the country and the region. Japan warmly applauded the good-faith efforts made by both sides in the negotiating process. Recently, however, violence has once again erupted in El Salvador, prompting the Security Council to call for a thorough and prompt investigation and to reaffirm the importance of the full and timely implementation of all the provisions of the peace agreement. Japan remains concerned about delays in implementing the agreement, but recognizes that the development of mutual trust will require time, patience and much wisdom. Japan trusts that both sides will recognize the need to adhere to a definite timetable, and that they will overcome their remaining difficulties in a peaceful manner.

Japan regards the forthcoming election in El Salvador as the culmination of the entire peace process, and hopes that the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), which is playing a key role in that process, will ensure the credibility of that election. This is essential to the establishment of lasting peace and stability.

I turn now to Guatemala. Japan welcomed the inauguration of Mr. Ramiro de León Carpio as that country's new President, democratically elected following the partial suspension of the Constitution by the former President last May. We hope the negotiations between the Government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union will be resumed promptly so as to strengthen the stability of the country.

With regard to Nicaragua, Japan has welcomed the efforts made by President Chamorro towards political reconciliation, even as she has had to cope with the difficulties of presiding over a divided Congress. Recalling the crisis that occurred last August, Japan hopes that all political and social divisions within Nicaragua will be overcome through negotiations - for example, through the national tripartite dialogue between the Nicaraguan Government, the FSLN and the UNO - and that further progress will be made in the democratization efforts, including civilian control of the armed forces. Japan

outlined its concerns about the situation in Nicaragua more fully in its statement on agenda item 45, "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua", at the current session.

Although genuine progress has been made in the establishment of peace and stability throughout Central America, serious difficulties still remain. But, rather than allowing ourselves to become discouraged by these difficulties, we should be challenged to resolve them by combining peace-keeping and peace-building efforts in new and creative ways.

In this context, Japan is extending various kinds of medium- and long-term cooperation, including yen loans, general grant aid and technical cooperation, to the countries in the region. In addition, it provides emergency assistance to the people of Central America at times of natural disasters. We hope that this development and humanitarian assistance will also help to advance the peace process and ensure that it is irreversible.

In addition to bilateral assistance, intra-regional cooperation is also important. Japan has been actively participating in various activities of the Partnership for Democracy and Development in Central America ever since it was established. Japan also serves as Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Economic Development, and presided over the Central American ministerial meeting last March in Tokyo. The success of the meeting was reflective of the progress that has been made in the peace process throughout the region. Japan will continue to support, in these and other forums, the initiatives of the nations of Central America.

In closing, I would like to note that the Secretary-General, who has played an important role in restoring peace and stability to Central America, deserves our admiration and strengthened support. I wish to emphasize that both the General Assembly and the Security Council should follow the situation in Central America very closely, with a view to applying the concept of peace-building in its most innovative sense. We hope that our experience in the region will spur further United Nations efforts to pursue peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace-building in other parts of the world. Japan is among the many nations that vigorously support this expansion of the United Nations role on behalf of world peace.

Mr. BIVERO (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Venezuela attaches particular importance to the item on the situation in Central America, because of its traditional ties of friendship and solidarity with all the countries of the area, and because of its permanent commitment to seeking solutions to the serious political, economic and social difficulties that those countries have had to face, to the serious detriment of their development processes.

Today, as the Secretary-General stresses, the region is firmly committed to a process of consolidating peace, which generally has reached a level of significant stability. The international community has been involved in this progress, supporting the processes of national peace and reconciliation as well as those of economic reconstruction and recovery, which are closely linked to them.

Venezuela, both individually and together with other countries with particular links to, and interests in, the region, will continue to support these processes, politically as well as economically. We have always been careful to respect the will of the Central American countries themselves, being convinced that the consolidation of peace and the promotion of development in the region will be more stable and long-lasting the more they respond to the convictions of those countries. This is an appropriate occasion to express our gratitude and admiration for the constant efforts of the Central American countries to identify and promote their own priorities in an exercise of affirmation that deserves the support of the entire international community.

Venezuela recognizes the particular characteristics of each national political policy process in Central America as well as the obstacles facing them. We will continue to be as objective as possible, with continuing support for the Secretary-General's good offices and for the will of the parties that have placed their trust in them. We are pleased with the progress described in the Secretary-General's report in this regard, and we note its assessments of the stage reached in each of these political processes of peace and national reconciliation. Venezuela will continue to work with them, as a friendly country, in the search for and the promotion of progress.

In the area of economic cooperation, as the Secretary-General's report also indicates, Venezuela has endeavoured to contribute to the reactivation of the Central American economies and the strengthening of ties of interdependence. It has done so both individually and with other countries of the area, in particular Colombia and Mexico, with which it forms the Group of Three.

I should like in this respect to highlight the signing on 12 February 1993, the signing of the Caracas Commitment, which established a new framework for cooperation between the Group of Three and the Central American region, as well as the Caracas Statement which renews the Group's commitment to create a free trade zone.

Yesterday we took part in the first international technical meeting on Central America. Here I should mention that Venezuela supports the Central American countries' initiative - they were represented in the technical meeting at ministerial level - to begin working towards an international conference for peace and development in Central America that would enable them to consolidate the progress in these areas that has been achieved so far, and to lay down sound foundations for multilateral cooperation in future.

In conclusion, I wish to offer our wholehearted support for the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report, which says that Central America has emerged from the difficult decade of the 1980s with a dynamic institutional framework, a comprehensive social and economic agenda and an active and constructive partnership with the international community, which will undoubtedly make it possible for Central America to continue to rely on international solidarity and to make use of it for the benefit of its peoples. Venezuela supports the United Nations continuing interest in, and support for, this process. We are sure that the General Assembly will ratify its collective commitment to peace, democracy and development in Central America.

Mr. OSVALD (Sweden): Over the last few years developments in Central America have been, by and large, very encouraging. The wind of democracy has swept away authoritarian regimes. Almost everywhere, war and conflict have given way to peace and reconciliation. There are now genuine prospects for dealing constructively with the economic and social injustices that have always been the roots of the conflicts in the region.

Since the outset, Sweden has actively supported the peace process in Central America. We shall continue to do so.

The objective of our political and economic endeavours in the region has always been to contribute to the promotion of peace, reconciliation, democracy and respect for human rights. In addition, Sweden supports economic reforms aiming at growth, increased trade and investment and a more equitable distribution of income favouring the poorest groups of the population, in so far as these objectives are part of the development efforts of the Central American countries and their commitments towards human rights and environmental protection.

Sweden has had programmes for development cooperation in Central America for more than 10 years. On average, our yearly contribution to the region for development projects and humanitarian assistance has been $115 million. This includes assistance under bilateral agreements, through the United Nations, or through regional as well as non-governmental organizations.

Sweden strongly supports the ongoing regional integration efforts in Central America. Such regional cooperation is, in our view, crucial for stability and democracy in the region.

The International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) process is a good example of what can be achieved through internationally supported regional cooperation. We support and are carefully monitoring joint efforts by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme to find a modality for giving continuation to the major aspects of the CIREFCA process after its conclusion in April 1994.

Sweden wholeheartedly supports the United Nations activities in Central America. As the peace process continues, we hope that these efforts can be expanded. The importance of the international community's political and economic support for Central America cannot be overestimated.

The progress made in the peace process in El Salvador is promising. The parties themselves and the United Nations through the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), have been the main contributors to this positive development. We consider it essential that ONUSAL should be able to continue its task and to support the peace process until the situation in El Salvador has been firmly consolidated. The will for peace and the courage and the willingness of the parties to compromise have made it possible to find solutions to many difficult and sensitive problems.

Sweden notes with satisfaction that many of the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth have now been implemented. We share the view of the Secretary-General that the remaining recommendations - especially those concerning reform of the judicial system, investigation of the activities of illegal groups and the ban on holding public office placed on individuals mentioned in the Commission's report - should be implemented before the start of the election campaign. The time between now and the elections in March next year will be of crucial importance. One of the main tasks must be to speed up voter registration and make it as comprehensive as possible. This is necessary to ensure the credibility of the election process.

Furthermore, the peace agreements must be fully implemented in order to promote a favourable political atmosphere. We are therefore concerned about the delays

with regard to the creation of the new civilian police, the reintegration of former soldiers and ex-FMLN combatants into civilian society, and the redistribution of land.

Recent acts of violence, notably the assassination of FMLN leaders, is another cause of grave concern to Sweden. We expect these acts to be promptly investigated and the guilty brought to justice.

It is of great importance that the international community should contribute by all means available to the realization of free and fair elections in El Salvador. Sweden has already stated its willingness to engage in the process by providing personnel, both in the preparatory phase of the elections and as election observers. In addition, Sweden has decided to allocate $7.5 million yearly over a period of three years, in part for the election process and in part for the successful installation of a new national civilian police force.

Sweden salutes the victory of the democratic and civilian forces in Guatemala earlier this year. We have strong reasons to hope that President Ramiro de León Carpio will continue the democratization and will vigorously promote respect for human rights. The early resumption of the peace negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG would make a crucial contribution to the consolidation of democracy and national reconciliation. President Ramiro de León Carpio has taken steps to help reactivate the negotiations.

In Sweden's view, an increased role for the United Nations in the negotiations in Guatemala may be of benefit to the peace process in Guatemala as a whole. We welcome the fact that both the Government and the URNG have expressed interest in a United Nations involvement.

Sweden will continue to follow the peace process in Guatemala closely. We are prepared to contribute to the process, provided the parties agree that this would be constructive.

We are still concerned about the human rights situation in Guatemala. A breakthrough in the peace negotiations is, in our view, likely to have a positive impact in this field. A separate, internationally verified agreement between the two parties on human rights issues would enhance the prospects for peace. Sweden provides assistance to Guatemala in areas such as human rights, and we are prepared to make additional efforts in this regard.

The agreement regarding repatriation of refugees, signed a year ago by the Guatemalan Government and representatives of the Guatemalan refugees, is unique and merits respect from all parties involved. It is important that this agreement be carried out as stipulated. Sweden will continue to monitor and support the implementation of the agreement, and we are encouraged by the recent reports in this regard.

The path towards mutual understanding and national reconciliation chosen by the Government of Nicaragua has our full support. However, the political basis for this endeavour must be broadened.

Sweden is aware of the difficult economic problems that the Nicaraguan leadership is confronting today. The continuation of Sweden's programme for development cooperation, amounting to $35 million during the current fiscal year, is a recognition of this fact.

Our objectives are firm. One aim of our assistance is to support Nicaragua's own efforts towards national reconciliation and a strengthening of democracy. Another is to promote the Nicaraguan programmes for economic stabilization and growth. Only through a consistent donor policy will we be able to maintain confidence in our programme for development cooperation with Nicaragua. However, when required, we have made the necessary modifications to our policy, and we urge other donor countries to show flexibility.

Sweden is of the view that the acute crisis in Nicaragua is basically political in nature. A national consensus must be reached on a number of fundamental political issues in order to create the conditions for a comprehensive approach to Nicaragua's problems, economic as well as political.

The national dialogue has to continue and must lead to a concrete agreement, in particular on questions of ownership and access to land, reform of the judicial system and transformation of the army and the police.

The parties in Nicaragua have a joint responsibility for setting their country on a stable political and economic track. This would be the best way to attract foreign cooperation.

We have previously stated that Sweden is prepared to take part, together with the United Nations and other members of the international community, in international efforts to contribute to the finding of solutions to the serious political problems that are hampering Nicaragua's development. This is, of course, subject to the existence of broad support among the parties in Nicaragua for such an endeavour.

In spite of all the difficult issues that remain to be solved, there are reasons for optimism as concerns

developments in Central America. Fortunately, the internal and regional problems that we see today can be approached on their own terms now that our vision is no longer clouded by the perceptions of the cold-war era.

Peace, reconciliation, democracy, justice, respect for human rights and economic development are at the top of the agenda. It is not only the duty but also in the interest of the international community to give its full support to the achievement of these goals in Central America.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be now closed.

It was so decided.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The report of the Secretary-General on the item before us today, "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development" (A/48/586), points out in paragraph 2 that, for a decade now, the United Nations has been assisting the peace process in Central America.

The report then goes on to remind us that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat itself have participated actively in that process, the success of which, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, led to a significant economic reactivation in 1992, owing to a great extent to internal demand. The report adds:

> "The transition from confrontation to consensus in intergovernmental relations has generated increased cooperation on a large number of issues. It has rekindled the thrust towards regional integration, with concrete results particularly in the area of trade." *(A/48/586, para. 5)*

The report states also:

> "The economic gains mentioned above must be consolidated against a background of world recession, decline in the price of traditional exports and growing difficulties for some export products to enter foreign markets." *(A/48/586, para. 7)*

On the other hand, the analysis before us recalls, too, that:

> "... many of the structural causes of the acute crisis suffered in the 1980s are still present. Social disparities remain a source of tensions. With regard to health care, housing, education and employment, the region's indicators continue to be a cause for concern. Across the region, extreme poverty has been on the increase in recent years. In addition, new challenges have emerged, such as drug trafficking and environmental degradation." *(A/48/586, para. 7)*

The report also notes:

> "In that context, Central American Governments have continued to stress the interrelationship between the goals of peace, freedom, democracy and development." *(A/48/586, para. 9)*

For Chile, the action that has been carried out in recent years by the Central American nations is truly exemplary. It serves as an example of the ability to innovate in the face of difficulties that had appeared insurmountable; an example of how to develop new concepts of security; an example of how to shoulder one's own problems with imagination, courage and resoluteness; and an example, too, of how peoples have been able to defend their political and human rights.

The Central American countries have been true leaders in the area of agreements for peace and political cooperation, and we should recognize that their attainments are no less important than the achievements in the Middle East and in South Africa. But these achievements require consolidation. The situation is not easy and stability is still fragile, hence the need for continued use of United Nations machinery at this new stage in the quest for a strengthening of peace, freedom, democracy and development - four terms that are synonymous with what Central America sees as its own destiny today. In this process, particular importance should be attached, in our view, to the players and institutions of civil society.

Another aspect of great importance to us is the fact that Central America has continued to believe in the United Nations, even at a time when - at the beginning of the 10 years of United Nations presence in the area, in a strictly political sense - the Organization was under scrutiny because of its apparent lack of effectiveness. With the determination of the usefulness of international action channeled through the United Nations, the validity and force of our Organization were demonstrated also. But demonstration of this validity should continue above and beyond peace-keeping operations, because - as we have so often reiterated in this forum when these topics are discussed at the United Nations - there can be no peace without development, just as there can be no development without peace.

Central America is an example that cannot be cast aside. It cannot be ignored, because the best examples cannot be cast aside. It is precisely because there are difficulties, obstacles and complexities - which have even required decisions by various United Nations bodies - that support must be reinforced. For this reason, the convening of a conference on peace and development in Central America is of great importance. Both this conference and the draft resolution (A/48/L.21), before us deserve our full support.

This Monday, there began, in Puntarenas, Costa Rica, a Latin American meeting dealing with the social aspects of regional cooperation. Various bodies entrusted with programmes relating to development and social investments are meeting there, with the objective of strengthening a continent-wide network for the exchange of experiences on these topics. Chile is participating in that exercise in the same spirit as that in which it is making this statement: with a deep commitment to working together within Latin America and the Caribbean, and with the objective of keeping alive the duty of international solidarity, of which Central America has shown itself to be deserving.

My country has been developing, in so far as its means permit, a programme of cooperation with Central America. In addition to our present participation in the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, we have since 1990 been carrying out various projects within the framework of a *rapprochement* with an area to which Chile attaches particular importance - not only because of historical ties but because, for us, this is not a case of solidarity with the problems of others. Rather, it is an opportunity for support, backing and commitment in a situation that is ours as well.

Consistent with our sense of integration with Latin America and the Caribbean, we accept wholly and permanently the realities of the region. Last week in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, Chile and the countries of Central America made a first general evaluation of this endeavour, with very encouraging results.

But, above and beyond our individual contribution, which, as I have mentioned, is necessarily limited, we believe that the countries of the developed world and the multilateral bodies must maintain their interest in Central America, despite the internal problems the cooperating countries are experiencing. We are aware that "development fatigue" is coming to be felt in certain parts of the developed world, but we believe that it is possible to optimize the use of resources and carry out efforts to achieve greater efficiency. None the less, the most important thing is to understand that the Governments and the civil societies of the Central American countries cannot do everything on their own. They have already made great sacrifices, and they deserve an integrated response from the international community. That is the political meaning of what we are discussing here today in the General Assembly.

In that spirit, the Rio Group, at its meeting in Santiago, Chile, some weeks ago lent support to a particular situation - that of Nicaragua - in order to deal with the problems that country is facing at this juncture.

I should like to conclude by pointing out that the prospects for Central America to become definitively a zone of peace, freedom, democracy and development are very good. Let us not allow this opportunity to slip through our fingers.

Mr. CÁRDENAS (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation is pleased to participate in this debate on the situation in Central America, to which we attach special importance. We have carefully analysed the report (A/48/586) of the Secretary-General, and we share many of its affirmations and conclusions.

The situation in the Central American region is, of course, no exception to the global trends emerging since the end of the cold war or to the concrete manifestations we have seen in the world in the course of efforts to attain the goals of peace, freedom, democracy and development. The quest for these interrelated goals will contribute to the consolidation of well-being and stability in the region.

The international community must be aware that the Central American region is emerging from a difficult period of internal conflicts and is entering a new stage of institutional reconstruction and economic development. However, the advancement of this process requires the solidarity and cooperation of all other countries, which can guide the process while taking into account, *inter alia*, the following urgent matters: the need for bilateral and multilateral financial support able to stimulate investment and, in consequence, growth; the reduction, partial forgiveness and/or conversion of external debt; and the need to prevent the continued suffering of some countries of the region because of the adverse consequences of protectionist commercial policies, especially those that, with devastating results, affect their traditional agricultural exports, hampering exports and disturbing the commercial flows of commodities. We are referring, of course, to the same policies that the Cairns Group has been denouncing during the lengthy Uruguay Round of negotiations.

In the context of assistance for sustainable development, we cannot ignore the fundamental importance

of providing suitable international cooperation in the processes of democratic consolidation and of continuously pouring in the economic and technical assistance indispensable to facing and surmounting the trying sequels of violent conflicts. International responsibility does not stop, of course, at settling crises of war, but must be shouldered, in peacetime, through the institutional, economic, social and cultural reconstruction of the countries involved.

My country is clearly committed to this philosophy, as it has shown in concrete fashion in peace processes; in such recent initiatives as the signing of conventions for technical cooperation in the fields of human resources, agriculture, forest management, fishing, energy and, in particular, the renegotiation of external public debt; and through its military and civilian participation in the peace-keeping operations of the region. We have also made, and continue to make, concrete contributions in human rights, assistance in elections and related matters.

In this spirit we reaffirm our commitment to the Central American region, whose peoples share such close bonds of fraternity with our own.

Mrs. JAGAN (Guyana): It is with a deep sense of satisfaction that I take the opportunity to speak on agenda item 40 - "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development".

I say this because it was but one short year ago that we in Guyana, after a period in which there were four rigged elections, experienced the return of participatory democracy, through the free expression of the will of the electorate. The result of this was a change of government after 28 years. Democracy has been an ideal which the people of Guyana and, no doubt, most people the world over cherish dearly. It is therefore our sincere hope that the opportunity afforded to the Guyana electorate for free and fair elections can be afforded in other countries where people are still clamouring for the right to self-determination and the right of a free expression of choice in regular, transparent polls. Peace, freedom, democracy and development are ideals cherished by all right-thinking men and women of the world.

The quest for democracy in Central America is qualitatively no different from that in other regions. We have in recent years witnessed the organization and conduct of elections in countries such as Nicaragua and El Salvador. These elections have been preceded by an elaborate plan of voter education, voter registration and other measures taken for the institutional strengthening of the whole democratic process. The role of the United Nations in this preparatory process must be highly commended. Its observer missions to monitor the actual conduct of the balloting and the counting of the ballots have provided the additional element of international supervision, thereby further strengthening the expression of the will of the people.

It remains the case, however, that the institutional strengthening of the electoral process and the holding of democratic elections are not ends in and of themselves, but, rather, the underpinnings of a climate of confidence in which the electorate can exist. We have seen, therefore, that there is still work to be done, both domestically and through international and regional organizations.

One way to promote peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central America is the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). This Mission has served to create the objective conditions for enhancing the prospects of economic and social development in that country. It has played a pivotal role in organizing and reinvigorating institutional mechanisms for the orderly conduct of the State's internal affairs. Thus the civil administrative structure - the police, the judiciary, the court system - have all been addressed in the interest of the preservation of democracy. The Government of Guyana was pleased to be in a position to offer a small contingent of members of its police force to perform the role of Civilian Police Monitors in El Salvador's transition process.

The international community must be vigilant against any attempt, as evidenced by recent events in that country, to frustrate consolidation of democracy.

I hasten to add that it would be unfortunate if we were to discuss the concepts of peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central America while confining our comments to a single State. Peace and stability have a regional connotation as well as on international one. Indeed, in the past situations of internal political unrest and violence have not gone unnoticed by the international community because of their potential threat to international tranquility. We should therefore applaud the efforts to return El Salvador to the fold of democratic Central American States, while recognizing that more needs to be done internally and that the precedents set by countries like Nicaragua are exemplary.

The Guyana delegation believes that the return to acceptable minimum standards of protection of human rights is essential to the return of peace and stability in Central America. Access to the courts, the right to a fair trial and recourse to the remedies of *habeas corpus* and

amparo are paramount. Moreover, the establishment of measures for the promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is the *sine qua non* for the establishment of a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

The international community, and developing countries in particular, have agonized for years over the question of whether democracy should of necessity precede development or whether development should be sustained while the democratic traditions of a State are either held in abeyance or otherwise lag behind comparative global norms. This debate was in a sense circular, since the institution of democracy is a political concern while development is more of an economic concern. But in reality the two concepts are inextricably intertwined: an improvement in statistical indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), in the absence of political and social conditions which allow people to improve the quality of their lives in a holistic sense, is short-lived if not counter-productive. The overwhelming body of opinion now is that democracy and development enjoy a symbiotic relationship and that quality of life indicators can no longer solely be economic statistics but must also reflect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the electorate.

While taking note of the qualitative improvement of democratic traditions not only in El Salvador, through the work *inter alia* of ONUSAL, but also in Central America as a whole, we must ensure that respect for human rights is complementary to economic and social development in order to achieve lasting and stable peace within the region. We in Guyana cherish these ideals, and we therefore pledge our support for their promotion, in the overall aim of maintaining international peace and security. Consequently, the Guyana delegation will support draft resolution A/48/L.21.

Mr. TELLO (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Government of Mexico has been closely following developments in Central America. Although the period of conflicts and confrontations seems finally to be behind us, we must recognize that progress has been uneven. Important progress has been made in adopting measures for dialogue and reconciliation. We can also note a strengthening of the institutional and democratic structures and a more dynamic evolution of the subregional process of harmonization and cooperation.

At the same time, new uncertainties and contradictions have arisen. New challenges to the definitive consolidation of peace, reconciliation and development have been added to old but persistent problems. Today more than ever it is vital that we redouble our efforts to realize the hope of the Presidents of the Central American countries that the region become one of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

The consolidation of a stable and lasting peace can be achieved only if there is progress in economic and social development. Peace and development are indissolubly linked. Hence, political, institutional and democratic progress must be accompanied by the capacity to raise the standards and quality of life of the region's inhabitants.

I should now like to discuss the efforts made by the Government and the society of El Salvador to carry out the Peace Agreements. Various aspects of the process formally initiated on 16 January 1992 have been implemented satisfactorily, while in other areas problems and delays remain. We encourage the parties to continue working, through dialogue, towards fulfilling all the commitments.

We cannot but express our deep concern at the unfortunate acts of violence recently observed in El Salvador; they bring new uncertainties to the peace process. The violence must be stopped and the facts relating to it fully brought to light.

We appeal to Salvadorian society to establish the conditions for carrying out the electoral process successfully. This would be the beginning of a new stage in the history of El Salvador. Hence, we are pleased at the signing, on 5 November of this year, of the "Commitment of Six Presidential Candidates to Peace and Stability in El Salvador".

The holding of elections in March 1994, under ONUSAL supervision, will be a decisive step in the process of consolidating peace. However, we must bear in mind that national reconciliation will not be automatic. All sectors of Salvadorian society will have to work daily and continually to consolidate the peace process and to take firm steps towards promoting economic development.

We should like to make special mention of ONUSAL, a key operation in resolving the Salvadorian conflict and implementing the Peace Agreements. We wish to express great appreciation for the difficult, painstaking work carried out by this Mission, which has carried out with dedication and efficiency the task entrusted to it by the Organization.

With respect to Guatemala, we note with satisfaction the restoration of constitutional order there after the events of last May. The process of dialogue should be begun again as quickly as possible, and the negotiations should take fully into account the progress achieved before the interruption of the process.

The people of Nicaragua continue to face the enormous challenge of national reconciliation. We are pleased with the agreement achieved on 21 August between the Government of Nicaragua, the National Opposition Union and the Sandinista National Liberation Front, pledging the removal of all the obstacles to the achievement of institutional, economic and social normalization.

We wish to stress once again the importance of international cooperation with Central America. The international community should continue to support the effort of the Central American countries to make progress towards peace and economic and social development.

Just as there was no major problem in finding financing during the years of armed conflict, the community of nations should now respond, more generously still, to the challenge of strengthening peace in this region.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation notes with satisfaction that the positive trends in the Central American region in the settlement of conflicts and crises and the elimination of tension are gathering momentum. It is obvious that the policy of national conciliation through dialogue and negotiation designed to halt violence, strengthen trust and cooperation, ensure respect for human rights, consolidate democratic institutions and create a civil society is yielding appreciable results.

As has been quite rightly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central America:

> "The end of the cold war and the end of the armed conflicts which afflicted El Salvador and Nicaragua and affected the region as a whole during the 1980s have generated better prospects for the achievement of the goals of peace, democratization, reconciliation, development and justice ..." (*A/48/586, para. 4*).

The settlement in El Salvador has now entered the delicate phase of preparations for elections, which are designed to be the culmination of the peace process. In this context, we share the profound concern expressed in the letter dated 3 November 1993 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/26689), concerning the situation regarding human rights in El Salvador and, in particular, politically motivated murders and delays in the creation of a national civil police force and in the implementation of the voter registration process. In the presidential statement dated 5 November 1993 (S/26695), the Security Council underlined the importance of full and timely implementation of all the provisions of the Peace Accords. The Council expressed concern about delays in the resolution of a number of problems, particularly the phasing out of the National Police force and the full deployment of the National Civil Police, the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth, the transfer of land and the carrying out of other reintegration programmes, which are essential for the development of a solid framework and a new climate for the respect of human rights in El Salvador.

While welcoming the agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) with regard to acceleration of the implementation of the Peace Accords, we would stress that the parties must do their utmost to ensure the irreversibility of democratic reforms based on respect for human rights and the social and economic rebirth of the country with the active support of the international community.

This task of consolidating peace on the basis of democracy and social and economic reforms is entirely in keeping with the goals of the Central American process itself.

Russia intends to continue to extend the necessary support to the work of the Secretary-General and of his representatives, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, and is ready to cooperate constructively with the Government of El Salvador, the FMLN and all interested countries in the interests of promoting peace and prosperity in that country.

It is our hope that an overall improvement in the situation in the Central American region will have a positive effect on the situation in Guatemala. The fact that the efforts of the Guatemalan leadership have been stalled for so long now - efforts designed to bring about a normalization of the situation in the country - gives ground for concern to us and to the whole international community. The continuation of the smouldering civil war in that country could in certain circumstances carry with it the danger of destabilization, not only for Guatemala, but for the whole region.

We would also hope that influential circles in Guatemalan society will demonstrate maximum flexibility and readiness to search for mutually acceptable solutions and reasonable compromises. However, we would stress that, given the motivation and the political will on the part of the Guatemalans themselves, a considerable contribution to the creation of favourable conditions for successful negotiations could be provided by a more active tapping of the potential of the United Nations and the Organization of

American States, as well as of the accumulated wealth of experience in overcoming crisis situations in the region. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General in this area.

We note the importance of consistent implementation of decisions of the Central American countries to convert Central America into a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development. The Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the Security Council and a permanent observer at the Organization of American States, is ready to continue cooperating constructively with the States of the region, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to promote a successful resolution of the problems they face as well as the total normalization of the situation in the region.

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Canada reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America based on freedom, democracy and development. The regional peace process demonstrates the determination of Central Americans, with the assistance of the international community, to resolve the problems afflicting their region. Canada congratulates the Governments of the Central American States, the United Nations and those Member States whose efforts have brought about a negotiated settlement of the civil conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and whose efforts are aimed at finding peaceful solutions to the ongoing civil conflict in Guatemala.

Canada welcomes the advances made in Central America with a view to settling the political, social and economic problems facing the region. We are optimistic that the Central American Governments' efforts to work together to face these challenges, and in particular their commitment to regional integration, will consolidate the progress already made towards establishing peace in the region. Increasing communication, understanding and cooperation between the Central American States are keys to strengthening the peace process. In this regard we note the summit meeting of the Central American Presidents held at Guatemala City from 27 to 29 October.

In El Salvador considerable progress has been made in implementing the Peace Accords signed in 1992. In this regard we salute the efforts of all the parties in carrying out the Accords. We should also like to pay a tribute to the important role the United Nations, through the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), has played and continues to play in the successful fulfilment of this objective. We are disturbed, however, by the apparent resurgence of politically motivated violence and the delays in carrying out certain provisions of the Peace Accords. The Canadian Government welcomes remarks by both the Salvadorian Government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front calling for renewed efforts to implement rapidly all the provisions of the Accords. We urge them to fulfil their obligations in this regard. It is especially important for the democratization process that all Salvadorians work together to ensure that the upcoming electoral campaign and the national elections scheduled for spring 1994 are free and fair.

(spoke in English)

Four years after the negotiated settlement of its civil conflict, Nicaragua has worked hard to overcome the many obstacles to the establishment of peace, democracy and development. The international community is providing significant financial and political support for those efforts. However, the economic situation is difficult and the political environment troublesome. We were especially concerned this year by the resort to violence and intimidation to achieve political ends by groups from both sides of the political spectrum. We welcome and fully support renewed efforts by President Chamorro to work towards political reconciliation in Nicaragua. While assistance from the international community can help, dialogue between political groups in Nicaragua remains the basis for building political stability and establishing the right environment for future prosperity.

Earlier this year the people of Guatemala, with international support, successfully defeated an attempt to thwart constitutional rule in their country, demonstrating a desire for civil society based on the rule of law. However, Central America's oldest armed civil conflict continues unresolved. The Canadian Government calls upon the Government of Guatemala and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity to resume the peace talks suspended this May as soon as possible with a view to ending this harmful confrontation. To this end, Canada welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts, in the framework of his mandate of good offices, to arrange a preliminary meeting in the coming weeks to establish the terms for the continuation of the peace talks.

The international community has played an important role in promoting peace in Central America. The United Nations, the Organization of American States and individual countries have all made significant contributions to help achieve peace, enhance democratic institutions and support economic growth. In this regard we welcome the meeting organized yesterday in New York by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on international assistance to the region. Canada has been part of this international involvement and remains fully engaged in efforts to build on the advances already made. Despite the

progress, however, these advances are fragile. International involvement can only complement the strength, resolve and courage of the Governments and peoples of Central America themselves, which remain essential to ensuring that the progress already made in establishing lasting peace and stability in the region is further strengthened.

Mr. HUSLID (Norway) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's lucid report (A/48/586) on the situation in Central America (A/48/586). The report describes in a precise manner the peace process under way and the efforts to establish a lasting democracy in Central America. The report is particularly useful in regard to the role the United Nations and the international community can play. My delegation has also taken note of the widespread sentiment expressed at the International Technical Meeting on Central America convened yesterday by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that there continues to be a strong need for active participation by the international community. It is in our opinion a positive aspect of the situation that the countries of Central America remain open to dialogue with the international community.

The situation in Central America is not without encouraging signs of development. Years of conflict and mistrust have given way to agreements that have been signed and implemented, and democratic elections have become the rule rather than the exception. Nevertheless, the picture is still not as clear and positive as one could wish. Certain incidents this year have given some cause for concern. However, we maintain our hope that the positive developments will continue. The reason for our guarded optimism is that we have witnessed agreements worked out by the national political forces in which their obvious mutual interests are reasonably balanced. A clear understanding has emerged that true democracy must prevail and that an end must be put to injustice.

The signature of the Peace Accords in El Salvador in January 1992 initiated a fruitful process of peace-building in that country - a process to which the United Nations has contributed substantially. However, we have learned in recent weeks with deep concern of several politically motivated murders in El Salvador. A return to old practices in El Salvador could put the whole peace process in danger. In order to maintain the positive trends it is important for State institutions to observe the laws scrupulously. They must also demonstrate the authority and responsibility to ensure fair and clean elections in March, with equal voting rights for all Salvadorians.

The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) is an example of the new kind of peace-keeping operation, integrating both military and civil post-conflict peace-building. ONUSAL has an innovative aspect in the way in which it is monitoring the human rights situation, and the experience that it is gaining may later prove useful in other conflict areas. Norway is pleased to have been able to take part in this process through participation in ONUSAL and the training of the new national civilian police force.

I turn to the question of Guatemala. Following the agreements of Oslo, Quéretaro and Mexico City, continuous efforts have been made to end the conflict in Guatemala through negotiations. The talks have been difficult and complex, but the parties involved have shown a constructive attitude. Unfortunately, these peace talks have been stalled since the beginning of the year.

It is therefore encouraging that last week the Government of Guatemala and the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) requested the Secretary-General to arrange a preliminary meeting between the two parties, to establish terms for continuing the peace talks. We believe that the Secretary-General and his staff have an excellent basis for carrying out that task. They can build on the experience acquired by the United Nations in the region, and the Secretary-General can suggest methods by which the United Nations, in cooperation with regional organizations, could assist. My country pledges its full support for these efforts, by, *inter alia*, participation in the Group of Friends of Guatemala.

The human rights situation in Guatemala remains a source of concern to us. There seems to be a need for more efficient processes of secure human rights for all sectors of the population. It is the responsibility of the Government to safeguard human rights. However, the international community should be prepared to help, if requested. We hope that ways and means of improving the human rights situation will be given the highest priority in renewed talks between the Government and the URNG.

With regard to the political process in Nicaragua, there is still a need for greater efforts to achieve a national consensus. It is urgent that a more stable basis for constructive talks between the President, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) and the Unión Nacional Opositora (UNO) be found. The dialogue has been disrupted by violence, and some armed groups have still not demobilized as agreed. However, only through political dialogue will it be possible to address the serious social and economic problems facing Nicaragua. For the good of the nation, all parties must be prepared to compromise. The current situation in the country is

causing hardship and disillusionment among the population.

The situation calls for renewed efforts by the international community to generate sustainable and healthy economic development. Stable economic growth for the benefit of the people can be achieved only in conditions of political stability, whose creation is the shared responsibility of all Nicaragua's political forces. Such conditions are a prerequisite for long-term investment and lasting trade relations, and they also make possible a more efficient use of development assistance. It must be stressed, however, that development assistance by itself - without a propitious political climate - is not sufficient to guarantee improved living conditions in the long run.

Norway is prepared, financially and otherwise, to maintain its support for the determined efforts of the Government of Nicaragua to secure peace and economic development, for the benefit of the people of that country.

Mr. LAING (Belize): Belize is happy to speak in support of the draft resolution sponsored by the other six countries of Central America.

The draft resolution quite correctly deals organically with the integrated issues of peace and reconciliation, the environment and sustainable development, the strengthening of democratic institutions, domestic tranquillity and negotiations, international cooperation and the key principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. These are all concerns of every Member of the Assembly, which will undoubtedly give the draft resolution consensus support. Certainly, it has the unreserved support of Belize, consistent with my country's long involvement with the organic problems of the isthmus where Belize is located.

In the field of the prevention of epidemic and other diseases, Belize services communities across the borders with its neighbours. Belize, whose population is about 200,000, has provided a safe haven for well over 20,000 refugees, even though it is an onerous burden. Of course, the refugees are from Central America.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/48/586, para. 12), Belize has taken certain initiatives to establish a meaningful regional dialogue on such pressing issues as narcotic drugs. As a bastion of democracy, human rights and justice, Belize provides some comfort to peoples elsewhere who strive for fulfilment of the basic values for which the Organization stands. Above all, Belize is a full partner - we would hope a pivotal partner - in the exercise of building bridges between our other economic subregion, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and historical Central America. This Central America-CARICOM forum is now widening the economic spaces of our two subregions, which are now searching together for a fuller life for their peoples.

This expansion and cooperation are due in no small measure to a recognition by Guatemala of the independence and sovereignty of Belize. As this recognition takes hold in the body politic of Guatemala, we look forward to the rapid resolution of a difference which persists because of an unfortunate legacy from the past.

The nagging problems with which the Assembly deals are largely attributable to history. Under this rubric, subjectivities get transmuted into plausible incipient objectivities. We are therefore grateful that the new Central American leaders are persons of wisdom and intellectual vigour. They eschew subjective historicity. As they reinvigorate democratic institutions and reduce violence they demonstrate a refreshing modernity. As they put forward proposals such as a new organic model for security they show that they wish Central America to regain its true, ancient, natural order, the order of the indigenous peoples.

Belize salutes this new leadership. As it does so, we must state our eagerness to participate fully in these new special plans, these new international conferences and these new initiatives. In all of them, Belize will willingly, and gratefully receive its fair share as a good neighbour. At the same time, good friends and neighbours in Central America continue to expect from Belize at least as much as it receives, to the greater glory of the Caribbean and of Central America.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform members that the Assembly will take action on draft resolution A/48/L.21 on Monday, 22 November, in the morning.

AGENDA ITEM 7

NOTIFICATION BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL UNDER ARTICLE 12, PARAGRAPH 2, OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/411 AND Add.1)

THE PRESIDENT: May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of document A/48/411 and Add.l.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 7?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 8 *(continued)*

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: EIGHTH REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (A/48/250/Add.7)

The PRESIDENT: I draw the attention of representatives to the eighth report of the General Committee, document A/48/250/Add.7, concerning requests submitted by the Secretary-General for the inclusion in the agenda of two additional items, as well as a request submitted by Algeria for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item.

In paragraph 1 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to include that additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 1 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends to the Assembly that this item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the Assembly adopts this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Next I should like to draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 2 (a) of the report. The General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item, entitled "Financing of the United Nations military liaison team in Cambodia".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to include that additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 2 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the Assembly approves of this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decisions just taken.

Next, I should like to draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 3 (a) of the report. The General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item, entitled "Emergency action to combat locust infestation in Africa".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to include that additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 3 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly adopts that recommendation of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: May I also take it that, as requested by the sponsor, the item should be considered by the Assembly as soon as possible because of its urgent character?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: It is my intention therefore to schedule this new item, which becomes item 175 of the agenda of the forty-eighth session, for consideration by the Assembly on Friday, 19 November, in the morning, as the first item, on the understanding that the agenda item will not be debated and that the Assembly will have before it a draft resolution for consideration.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.